

# Reflection of Corporation Social Responsibility in Supporting of Saudi Health Care Sector through Covid 19 Pandemic

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*Abstract:* - Current study aimed at highlighting reflections of CSR and its role in supporting healthcare system in KSA during COVID 19 pandemic. Quantitative approach was employed through utilizing an online questionnaire distributed on total of (97) individuals within KSA hospitals which included managers of public relations, external relations or marketing in Saudi governmental or private hospitals within Saudi hospitals. Results of study indicated that the main hypothesis was accepted, and it was seen that CSR has the ability to positively influence and support the healthcare system in Saudi Arabia during COVID 19. Among the chosen dimensions of CSR (Reputation, Ethics, Social Orientation and Profitability), it appeared that ethics was the most influential aspect that has a main role in supporting and backing up the healthcare system in KSA during the pandemic, and this concept helped in supporting the Saudi healthcare system during the breakout of the pandemic from collapsing. Study recommended increasing the awareness of social responsibility among organizations in order to increase the relationship between stakeholders (organizations) and the community.

*Keywords:* - Corporate Social Responsibility, Reputation, Social Orientation, Ethics, Community, Pandemic, COVID 19, KSA

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## 1 Introduction

Social Responsibility of Organizations is a new concept that has emerged remarkably during the last two decades in the literature of administrative sciences.; it as a new formula for the relationship of business organizations to their internal and external environment, so that the measure of their efficiency and quality has become measured by their ability to respond to the requirements of their external environment [5; 18]. The management of organizations was based in its openness and closure on the external environment on administrative and social philosophies and theories that appeared successively since the end of the nineteenth century, and accordingly, business organizations witnessed during that period many administrative patterns, starting from management with the owner, then management by the manager, then management by the customer. Today, business world is depending its operations on the transition to a new type of management that can be called “management by society”, as an expression of the social responsibility of business organizations towards the societies in which they operate and the necessity of

their contribution to their sustainable development [16; 20].

With the appearance of COVID19 in 2019 and the declaration from WHO stating that COVID19 is a pandemic, almost all countries started processes of locking down, quarantines and full closures to protect its systems, individuals and infrastructure from collapsing due to the breakout of a virus that is not well-known for medical society, not even a vaccine is available or was put under study [13]. Many organizations were closed, people were forbidden to work and systems were suspended as an answer to the WHO call of protection [17; 19]. During this episode, many organizations started to take initiatives in order to support the country they operate in, and as a form of their social responsibility towards the society in which they are known in [5].

From that point, current study aimed at examining the reflections of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in supporting Saudi health care sector through COVID 19 pandemic from perspective of managers of public relations, external

relations or marketing in Saudi governmental or private hospitals.

## 2 Objectives of Study

Aim of current study was reached through actualizing the following set of objectives:

1. Identify the meaning and approaches to CSR
2. Highlight types and forms of CSR in a society
3. Identify aspects of CSR during COVID 19 in Saudi Arabia and its role in supporting Saudi health system

The research gap here lies in determining the extent to which the organizations sector and the business environment contribute to supporting Saudi civil society and renewing the health sectors during the COVID 19 pandemic, which is the sector that was most affected and most important during the pandemic period.

Contribution of current study lies in its ability to be a guide for business organization within their environment in order to find areas in which they can contribute to the wellness and goodness of society. In addition to that, current study may highlight benefits of CSR as an approach to increase market share, reputation and competitive advantage of an organization.

## 3 Literature Review

### 3.1 Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Social responsibility of organizations is now considered the prevailing trend after it was a show of doing well in the past, but few organizations practice it well [6]. Today we see that the organizations' evaluation no longer depends on their profitability only, and they no longer rely on building their reputation on their financial positions only [2]. Rather, modern concepts have emerged that help create a work environment capable of dealing with the rapid developments, the most prominent of which is the concept of "social responsibility" that imposes itself on the scene national and international economic [11]. It was argued that the idea of social responsibility arose as a result of many problems and many crises known to business organizations mainly related to the organization's view of its self-interest at the expense of the interest of the society in which it is active, in

parallel with the emergence of new conditions and new social and environmental awareness and modern concepts based in its entirety on the concept of social giving that developed with the growth of community needs. And the extent to which business organizations have adopted this new trend through different stages of time, starting with the emergence of the institution's responsibility towards society, then the various scientific theories that touched on this topic and finally the term social responsibility of business organizations.

### 3.2 Definition of Social Responsibility (SR)

Social responsibility emerged after the industrial revolution and its emergence was linked to the rise of industrial projects and the progress that organizations experienced during that period thanks to various scientific inventions that contributed greatly to achieving the organization's ultimate goal of maximizing profits, thus depleting all available resources of nature and humanity, where children and women were employed for long hours and in harsh working conditions and low wages, it is assumed that the responsibility of the organization is limited to producing goods and services that are useful to society only and through which it achieves returns for the owners [1].

According to [16], social responsibility refers to an ethical commitment between the community organizations, through which the organization seeks to strengthen the ties between it and between societies in general, which in turn reflects on its success and improving its future performance. Social responsibility was defined as a contract between the organization and the community whereby the organization is committed to satisfying the community in a way that achieves its interest and is seen as a commitment by the organization towards the community in which it lives [2]. This can take place through evaluation of many social activities such as fighting poverty, pollution and creating job opportunities, in addition to solve problems of health, housing, transportation, and other services. From another perspective, social responsibility is the set of decisions and actions taken by the organization to reach the achievement of the desired goals and the prevailing values in society, which ultimately represent part of the direct

economic benefits of managing the organization and seeking to achieve them as part of its strategy [6].

Also, social responsibility as organizations act in a responsible and accountable manner, not only in front of property rights holders, but in front of other stakeholders including employees, clients, government, partners, communities and future generations [9], while [3] defined it as ethical commitment and responsible behaviour towards a group of parties who are stakeholders, and among the most important parties benefiting from social responsibility programs we find both society and the environment, and this reflects that the concept of social responsibility came to enhance the role and position of organizations in society not only as an economic entity but also, as a social entity, it contributes to solving community problems and preserving the environment in which it operates.

### **3.3 Theories behind Social Responsibility**

Among the most important theories that pave the way for scientific rooting and the idiomatic explanation of the concept of social responsibility, we mention the following:

#### **3.3.1 Neoclassical Theory "Shareholder Model"**

Which refers to rejecting the idea of social responsibility based on "nothing but the highest profits for the owners" and the pioneer of this theory is the American economist Milton Friedman, who won the Nobel Prize in economics, which indicates that the practice of social responsibility is through the decisions directed to improving the yield and profitability for the benefit of the shareholders and that the principle of maximizing the shareholder value is the appropriate social goal for business organizations because it is equivalent to maximizing the social revolution of the organization [13].

#### **3.3.2 Agency Theory "La théorie de l'agence"**

Agency theory emerged thanks to the contribution of researchers "Michael Jensen and William Meckling" who consider the organization a free market and the work contract is nothing but a commercial contract, and agency means that a person assigns his interests to another person as is the case for the organization when the shareholders delegate the management tasks to the directors [3]. This theory explains the relationship between managers and shareholders in the framework of governance, and this theory can also include the group of stakeholders dealing with the organization,

as their responsibility is based on the managers as agents who have contractual relations with many categories of actors: shareholders, creditors, customers, consumers, suppliers, Local communities, non-governmental organizations. According to this theory, stakeholders have the ability to influence the strategic decisions of managers [11].

#### **3.3.3 Stakeholders' Theory**

Stakeholders are considered one of the important areas in which organizations play a social role, and they are individuals, groups, or organizations that are directly affected by the behaviour and existence of the organization and have a stake or benefit from it or its performance [10]. According to this theory, the organization is considered the result of relationships Different between the groups of stakeholders who are not limited only to the total shareholders, but the group of actors involved in the activities and decisions of the organization and the responsibility towards society becomes a responsibility towards the stakeholders [17].

We can deduce three different directions from this theory: the descriptive and effective two directions, which are based on the contractual vision of an organized relationship - the stakeholders.

### **3.4 Corporate Social Responsibility during COVID 19**

According to [7], the concept of corporate social responsibility focuses on the role and responsibility of the company towards its society, which starts with its employees and moves to the maximum extent of those dealing with these companies and their products and the protection of their rights. The concepts of social responsibility are based here, as it is a wide range of responsibilities towards the preservation and protection of everyone's rights. On the other hand, [8] argued that in light of the economic conditions that surround companies and are affected by this pandemic, companies must focus on giving their employees more space to preserve their health and enable them to perform their work remotely in accordance with the established and recommended precautions of health systems. The implementation of some practices will affect these companies in the future, as the current changes will instill in companies and their employees a new culture that may be better to adopt and practice, and not to retreat from it or return to a point before the spread of this pandemic. Also, [15] stated that in light of the pandemic conditions, it is good for companies to seek to adopt civil society institutions operating in the charitable and non-

profit sector, to cover the costs of their programs and support them in the face of current circumstances and help achieve more societal stability, and to support the health and community sector in facing these conditions.

It confirmed that in the world, the SCR corporate social responsibility faced great challenges, represented by the retreat of some companies from performing their social role, for fear of the prolonged crisis. Among some of the emerging problems are the increased layoffs of employees and workers in the business sectors due to the inability to bear the high continuous expenses. This may affect the relationship between workers and their companies, which may suffer a loss of confidence between all parties, and this in the future may lead to the existence of cases or legislations that work to achieve job security for workers for a long period without being affected by the surrounding factors and disasters [12].

The private sector and various Saudi and multinational organizations were suspended by the Saudi government during the pandemic period, and support continues to this day. The organizations demonstrated their social responsibility by introducing many different initiatives that helped the Saudi government to address the COVID 19 pandemic and prevent the collapse of the Saudi health system.

An example of the social responsibility of organizations in Saudi Arabia during the pandemic period is the initiative of Saudi banks, which deliberately postponed the premiums of workers in the Saudi public and private health sector for a period of 3 months, and 12 Saudi banks supported the Saudi Waqf Health Fund with a value of 160.7 million riyals in addition to Many Saudi energy companies, which paid half a billion riyals to the Waqf Health Fund, and other organizations created what was called a health care portfolio and were supported by nearly 2 billion riyals in order to finance up to 1000 health facilities. As for the insurance companies, they have supported the efforts of the Ministry of Health by making financial donations worth more than 67 million riyals.

#### **4 Hypotheses Development**

According to [4], CSR has the ability to influence company reputation; researcher point out that, in the business environment, the social responsibility of organizations has become of great importance and from this stems the goal of the study to find out the impact of the organization's social responsibility on its reputation by determining the role of the

community activities adopted by the organization and its role in revitalizing the organization's reputation and advancing its image in front of society. By reviewing the previous literature, the study has proven that social responsibility has a positive effect on improving the reputation of the organization internally and externally [14]. At the internal level, social responsibility contributes to improving the reputation of the organization through strengthening relationships with stakeholders and employees (as internal customers), and from an external perspective, the social responsibility has a positive effect in improving the reputation of the organization with external customers, suppliers and even competitors.

From the perspective of [2] and [10], the idea of social responsibility and its spread on social media contributes significantly to drawing and clarifying the general policy of the organization by clarifying the extent of the organization's contribution to society and supporting various societal sectors. On the other hand, the researchers emphasized that the organization's adoption of the principle of social responsibility contributes to helping the organization to formulate its social strategy and analyse the community based on its strategic ability and thus improve its strategic results. In addition, the study showed that the idea of social responsibility is not accepted socially unless the organizations contribute to the merging between social responsibility and ethics. These results emerged through the case study adopted by the study in which it was made clear that social responsibility integrated with ethics helps the organization in adapting to the dynamic and volatile business environment and thus strengthening the relationship between society and stakeholders.

Social orientation was one of the most important outputs of organizations' social responsibility, as the [6] showed that community members usually adopt a positive attitude towards organizations that have a responsibility towards society through raising the level of trust in the brand first and then trust in the organization.

As for [9], it found that social responsibility is very important for organizations, especially multinational organizations, as researchers found that members of society usually become more confident in multinational organizations that provide support in all its forms to the society in which they work, here once again the idea of The ethics that are combined with social responsibility that greatly contribute to deepening the level of trust between the external clients and the organization.

Based on the above hypotheses development, researcher was able to draw the relationship between

study variables based on the following model from

which hypotheses of study were extracted:

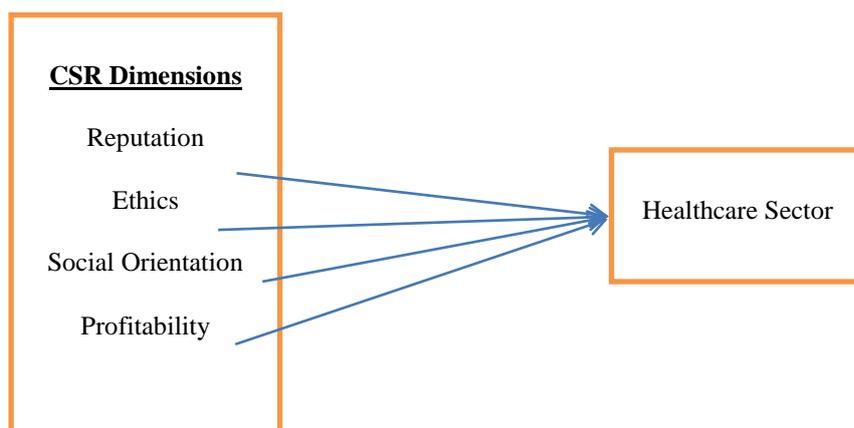


Fig. 1: Study Model [4]; Bowen et al (2020) and Jiménez et al (2021)

### Main Hypothesis:

**H:** CSR positively influences Saudi healthcare sector during COVID 19 pandemic

### Sub-Hypotheses

**H1:** company reputation positively influences Saudi healthcare sector during COVID 19 pandemic

**H2:** company ethics positively influences Saudi healthcare sector during COVID 19 pandemic

**H3:** Company social orientation positively influences Saudi healthcare sector during COVID 19 pandemic

**H4:** company profitability positively influences Saudi healthcare sector during COVID 19 pandemic

## 5 Methods

Current study employed the quantitative approach in order to facilitate the achievement of its main aim which focuses on at examining the reflections of corporate social responsibility (CSR) in supporting Saudi health care sector through COVID 19 pandemic from perspective of managers of public relations, external relations or marketing in Saudi governmental or private hospitals within Saudi hospitals. Researcher employed the questionnaire as a tool, the questionnaire was uploaded online – due to COVID 19 health precautions – and the link was sent to total of (150) managers of public relations, external relations or marketing within Saudi hospitals. The questionnaire was built by researcher depending on previous studies including [4; 2; 10]. Statements of questionnaire appeared in three main sections,

demographic including (age, gender, experience and qualifications) the independent variables (CSR – reputation, ethics, profitability and social orientation), while the final section was concerned with the dependent variable which was the Saudi healthcare sector. After application process researcher was able to retrieve (97) properly filled questionnaires which indicated a response rate of (64.6%) as statistically accepted ratio. SPSS was used in order to screen and analyse the gathered primary data. Following tests were used:

- Descriptive Statistics
- Multiple Regression
- Linear Regression

Cronbach alpha was used to test the reliability of the questionnaire, Alpha value for the scale =0.855 was acceptable since it was greater than the cut-off value 0.60:

## 6 Results

### 6.1 Demographic Results

Results of sample characteristics analysis showed that majority of respondents were males forming 71.1% of total sample, who were within the age range of 25-35 years old forming 72.2%. In addition to that, it was seen that majority of respondents held an MA degree forming 60.8% with an experience of 2-5 years forming 54.6%.

### 6.2 Questionnaire Analysis

Through mean and standard deviation, responses to questionnaire statements were analysed. It can be said from what came along with SPSS that respondents had positive

attitudes towards statements of questionnaire as all statements scored higher than mean of scale 3.00. The highest mean for statements was scored by a statement articulated "The support given by organization during COVID19 helped the medical sector to support the society" scoring a mean of 4.11/5.00 compared to the least scoring mean for the statement articulated "The bigger the organization is the more influential its help was" scoring a mean of 3.36/5.00 which was also seen as statistically positive. Showing more generalized results, mean and standard deviation of variables were calculated.

It was seen that the highest mean was for the benefit of "Ethics" variable as it scored a mean of 3.90/5.00 compared to the least scoring variable which was "Reputation" scoring a mean of 3.61/5.00 which also seen as statistically positive.

### 6.3 Hypotheses Testing

#### Main Hypothesis:

#### **CSR positively influences Saudi healthcare sector during COVID 19 pandemic**

Table 1. Testing Main Hypothesis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	R	R Square
	B	Std. Error	Beta				
1 (Constant)	.475	.429		1.107	.271	.655	.428
Reputation	.192	.094	.187	2.058	.042		
Ethics	.180	.091	.185	1.973	.051		
Orientation	.013	.106	.012	.122	.903		
Profitability	.490	.106	.458	4.602	.000		

Multiple regression was used to test above hypothesis,  $r = 0.82$  reflected high and relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. Also, it was found that the independent variables explain **67.2%** in the variance of the dependent variable. Also it was found that F value was significant at 0.05

level, that meant "CSR positively influences Saudi healthcare sector during COVID 19 pandemic"

#### **H1: company reputation positively influences Saudi healthcare sector during COVID 19 pandemic**

Table 2. Testing 1<sup>st</sup> sub-Hypothesis

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	R	R Square
	B	Std. Error	Beta				
1 (Constant)	2.216	.351		6.307	.000	.413	.171
Reputation	.425	.096	.413	4.422	.000		

Regression was used to test above hypothesis,  $r = 0.413$  reflected medium and positive relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. Also, it was found that the independent variable explains **17.1%** in the variance of the dependent variable. Also it was found that F value was significant at 0.05

level, that meant "company reputation positively influences Saudi healthcare sector during COVID 19 pandemic"

#### **H2: company ethics positively influences Saudi healthcare sector during COVID 19 pandemic**

Table 3. Testing 2<sup>nd</sup> sub-Hypothesis

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients				
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	R	R Square
1	(Constant)	2.103	.356		5.905	.000	.433	.188
	Ethics	.423	.090	.433	4.685	.000		

Linear regression was used to test above hypothesis,  $r = 0.433$  reflected medium and positive relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. Also, it was found that the independent variable explains **18.8%** in the variance of the dependent variable. Also it was found that F

value was significant at 0.05 level, that meant "company ethics positively influences Saudi healthcare sector during COVID 19 pandemic"

**H3: Company social orientation positively influences Saudi healthcare sector during COVID 19 pandemic**

Table 4. Testing 3<sup>rd</sup> sub-Hypothesis

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients				
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	R	R Square
1	(Constant)	2.199	.398		5.522	.000	.375	.140
	Orientation	.407	.103	.375	3.938	.000		

Linear regression was used to test above hypothesis,  $r = 0.375$  reflected medium and positive relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. Also, it was found that the independent variable explains **14%** in the variance of the dependent variable. Also it was found that F value was

significant at 0.05 level, that meant "Company social orientation positively influences Saudi healthcare sector during COVID 19 pandemic"

**H4: company profitability positively influences Saudi healthcare sector during COVID 19 pandemic**

Table 5. Testing 4<sup>th</sup> sub-Hypothesis

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients				
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	R	R Square
1	(Constant)	1.419	.337		4.214	.000	.583	.340
	Profitability	.624	.089	.583	6.995	.000		

Linear regression was used to test above hypothesis,  $r = 0.583$  reflected medium and positive relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable. Also, it was found that the independent variable explained **34%** in the variance of the dependent variable. Also it was found that F value was significant at 0.05 level, that meant "company profitability positively influences Saudi healthcare sector during COVID 19 pandemic".

## 7 Discussion

Current study aimed at highlighting reflections of CSR and its role in supporting healthcare system in KSA during COVID 19 pandemic. Quantitative approach was employed through utilizing an online questionnaire distributed on total of (97) individuals within KSA hospitals. Study results indicated the following:

A. Individuals responded to the questionnaire showed high level of understanding and awareness regarding the concept of social responsibility

B. Corporates in KSA showed a high level of social responsibility which was indicated based on individuals answers

C. The main hypothesis was accepted and there appeared that CSR positively influences Saudi healthcare sector during COVID 19 pandemic

D. All adopted CSR variables (reputation, ethics, social orientation and profitability) had a positive relationship in supporting healthcare system in KSA during the pandemic

E. The highest relationship appeared to be between the variable of ethics and healthcare system in KSA showing a variance of 34% and indicating a medium and positive relationship

F. Social orientation as variable was the least influential on Saudi healthcare system scoring a variance of 14% but with a medium and positive relationship.

Despite the large and intense discussions that are circulating daily about the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic on the world and the global economy and the severe social and economic crises that could result from it, there is a clear neglect of the relationship between this emerging virus and social responsibility, it is not in any way acceptable to accept social and moral responsibility in times of prosperity, for the social responsibility of individuals, institutions and states is required in all circumstances, and more required in difficult circumstances, as it constitutes a basic and important pillar in the life of societies, without which life becomes chaos and the law of the jungle prevails.

Study was able to prove that social responsibility has always been an obsession for many governments and peoples alike, and websites and social media platforms have often used this term, but mostly from one side only, which is the aspect related to commercial establishments and businessmen, and this means the extent of the contribution (donation) of establishments and men Businesses to carry out some projects that the community considers urgently need, and this concept has received wide attention as an indicator that determines the extent of the establishments' belonging to their communities, but this concept has expanded in a deeper way to include all profit and non-profit establishments and even the citizen's responsibility towards his country.

Social responsibility is not only - as some believe - just laws that a state puts in place to encourage private sector initiatives towards society, but rather a culture that expresses the behaviour and civilization of an entire society. Social responsibility is an ethical culture in the first place that binds every enterprise and individual in what contributes to the development of societies and the achievement of good General, it simply means a kind of social solidarity, and it manifests itself especially in times of emergency crises and in times of disaster.

The study proved that the relationship between the organizations' social responsibility was directly proportional to the increase and rise of COVID 19 pandemic cases in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, as it was observed through the analysis of the study and the opinions of individuals that the organizations operating in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia showed a lot of material, moral and logistical support for hospitals and health centres in order to help the health sector cope with the pandemic and respond to it without damaging the health infrastructure of the sector.

## 8 Conclusion

With the emergence of the COVID 19 pandemic that attacked all countries of the world, the private sector has become in direct challenge with this pandemic and its economic, social and health impacts. This has made companies in a real test of how to deal in times of crisis, and made corporate social responsibility practices (CSR). During this pandemic, companies were provided with great opportunities and lessons that can be used to test the effectiveness of these companies in exercising their social responsibility.

Managing the social responsibility of organizations during a pandemic imposed a new challenge for administrative leaderships, requiring them to make advanced decisions that make social responsibility - from the start - a basic function of the organization in addition to the functions of marketing, production, recruitment, financing and management, and embodying that responsibility in strategic plans and organizational structures and in all administrative processes. As an essential step towards satisfying the needs of societies, based on the nature of the activity of each organization and regardless of whether it is private or public.

## 9 Recommendations

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) emerged with this crisis at the forefront of researchers' and community concerns, in order to achieve a sustainable partnership between society, stakeholders and companies, this area will be the

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